

Border blockades: Min. Alhabra- USDOT Sec. Buttigieg engagement

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FYI. Readout of TC Min.Alhabra – USDOT Sec. Buttigieg call at midday today.
Note in particular how the Secretary points to the vulnerability of CAN-US Supply Chains, in particular on autos.
S.

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Subject: RE: Biden Administration engagement on border blockades

Good afternoon, please see readout below:

Summary of call between Minister Alhabra and USDOT Secretary Buttigieg, February 10

- The Minister and Secretary spoke briefly at noon today, at the Secretary's behest, to discuss the ongoing protests and their impact on traffic across the international bridges and our integrated supply chains.
- Also on the call from DOT was Annie Petsonk, Principle Deputy Assistant Secretary for Aviation and International Affairs and Julie Abraham, Director for International. The Minister was joined by the DM, the Associate DM, and the Minister's Office.
- Secretary Buttigieg opened by noting the unique and unexpected issues that require ministerial intervention, which for him included s.38
s.38
- The Minister moved quickly to the point of the call, indicating he had just spoken to the PM, who is taking the issue very seriously. In Canada's decentralized system of government, the provincial government has certain authorities it can exercise first. However, should the issue not be addressed in the near term, the GoC will step in.
- The Secretary shared his deep concern for the impacts on both US and Canadian economies. He recalled the number of times that the Minister has spoken to him about the importance of our integrated supply chains, in particular with respect to our automotive industries, but how s.38
s.38 Ohio and Michigan (Governor Whitmer) are very concerned, with impacts being felt at Ford and GM.
- s.38
s.38 to which the Minister responded that jurisdiction for law enforcement lies with provinces, though sometimes delegated to the municipality. The PM has spoken with Premier Ford, and the Minister has spoken with to his counterpart. If the bridge is not cleared within the next few hours, the PM has asked the Attorney General for legal options where the GoC can get involved and clear the blockade. Canada's national security advisor will be briefing the WH in detail about our action plan over the next few hours.
- The Secretary also expressed his view that this is an information or misinformation operation. He is especially concerned with s.38 the impact on s.38 the image of trucking in general at a time when the government is supporting truckers for their role as essential workers.

- The Minister noted that, in his public comments, he is making sure to highlight how truckers are distancing themselves from these unlawful activities. And that he's met with the CTA and Teamsters, and asked them to make public statements indicating that truckers are not on side with this – it's hurting their image.
- The Secretary took note of that approach and added that the ATA also issued a statement strongly opposing any protests that compromise national or economic security.
- The Secretary re-iterated his offer that the US stands ready to help.
- The Minister closed by thanking the Secretary for the offer and re-iterating that he understands the sense of urgency and wants to resolve this ASAP.

(drafted by Frank Stendardo, Transport Counsellor)

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